

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (original) A wheel end assembly for a vehicle having optional four-wheel/two-wheel drive comprising:

a wheel hub having an inwardly extending spindle portion configured to have an inboard end and a shoulder spaced outwardly of said inboard end;

a wheel bearing mounted on said spindle portion for rotatably mounting said wheel hub to a vehicle chassis, said wheel bearing having an outboard end abutted against the shoulder;

said inboard end of said spindle portion roll formed against an inboard end of said bearing and producing thereby a desired preload on said bearing and securing of said preload;

said spindle portion at said inboard end being cylindrical to define an inner wall configured to provide a securing feature, a coupler having an outer diameter fitted to the inner wall and mated to the securing feature to provide common rotation of the coupler and the spindle, said coupler having an inboard end protruding from the inboard end of the spindle;

an axle portion positioned adjacent the inboard end of the coupler and rotatable relative to the coupler and defining thereby adjacent portions of the axle portion and coupler, splines provided on the adjacent portions and a spline engaging

clutch ring slidable between engagement with one and engagement with both the splines of the adjacent portions.

2. (original) A wheel end assembly as defined in Claim 1 wherein the coupler is cylindrical and in cooperation with the wheel hub defines a cylindrical support, said axle portion extended into said cylindrical support and a bearing provided in said cylindrical support for relative rotation of the axle portion.

3. (new) A wheel end assembly for a vehicle having optional four-wheel/two-wheel drive comprising:

a wheel hub having an inwardly extending spindle portion configured to have an inboard end and a shoulder spaced outwardly of said inboard end;

a wheel bearing mounted on said spindle portion for rotatably mounting said wheel hub to a vehicle chassis, said wheel bearing having an outboard end abutted against the shoulder;

said inboard end of said spindle portion roll formed against an inboard end of said bearing and producing thereby a desired preload on said bearing and securing of said preload;

said inboard end of said spindle portion having an external circumference configured to have splines, said bearing having an inboard end with an internal circumference configured to have splines that are fitted to the splines of the spindle and said inboard end of said bearing having an external circumference configured to have splines;

an axle portion positioned adjacent said inboard end of the bearing and having splines adjacent to the splines of the external circumference of the bearing, and a clutch ring slidable on the splines of said external circumference of the bearing and said axle portion and slidable between engagement with one only of said bearing and axle portion and engagement with both of said bearing and axle portions.

4. (new) A wheel end assembly for a vehicle having optional four-wheel/two-wheel drive comprising:

a wheel hub having an inwardly extending spindle portion configured to have an inboard end and a shoulder spaced outwardly of said inboard end;

a wheel bearing mounted on said spindle portion for rotatably mounting said wheel hub to a vehicle chassis, said inboard end of said bearing having an external circumference configured to have splines;

an axle portion positioned adjacent said inboard end of the bearing and having splines adjacent to the splines of the external circumference of the bearing, and a clutch ring slidable on the splines of said external circumference of the bearing and said axle portion and slidable between engagement with one only of said bearing and axle portion and engagement with both of said bearing and axle portions.